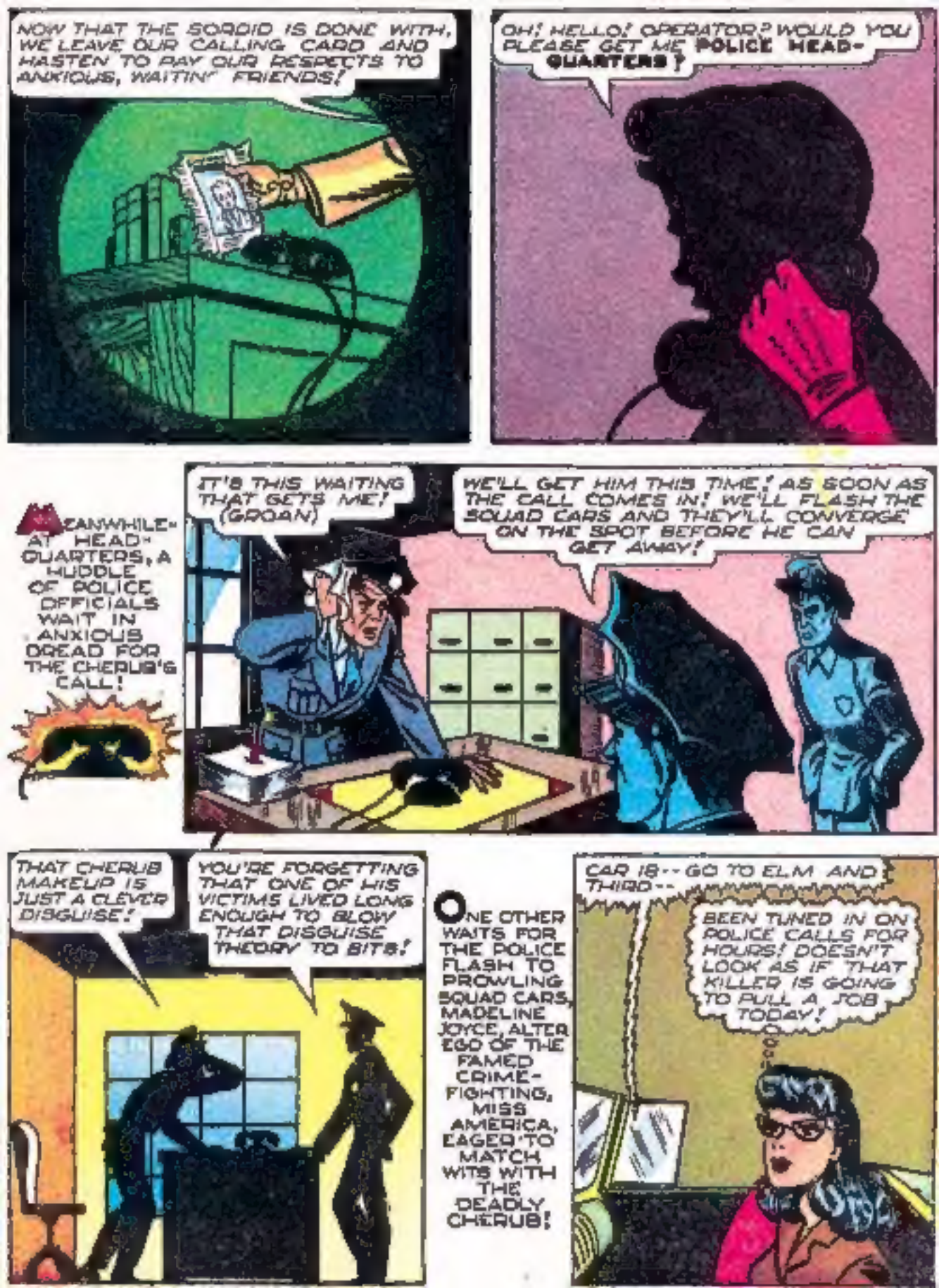
Miss AMERICA

WHO IS THE SOFT SPOKEN, ICY-NERVED YOUTH WHO DESTROYS WITH A CHERUBIC SMILE? WHAT DIABOLIC PURPOSE LAY BENEATH THIS BOASTING SUSPECTS, TAUNTING OF THE BAFFLED POLICE? WHY DID HE LEAVE HIS PORTRAIT AT THE SCENE OF EACH CRIME? **MISS AMERICA** IN SEARCH OF THE ANSWERS, COMES TO GRIP WITH---

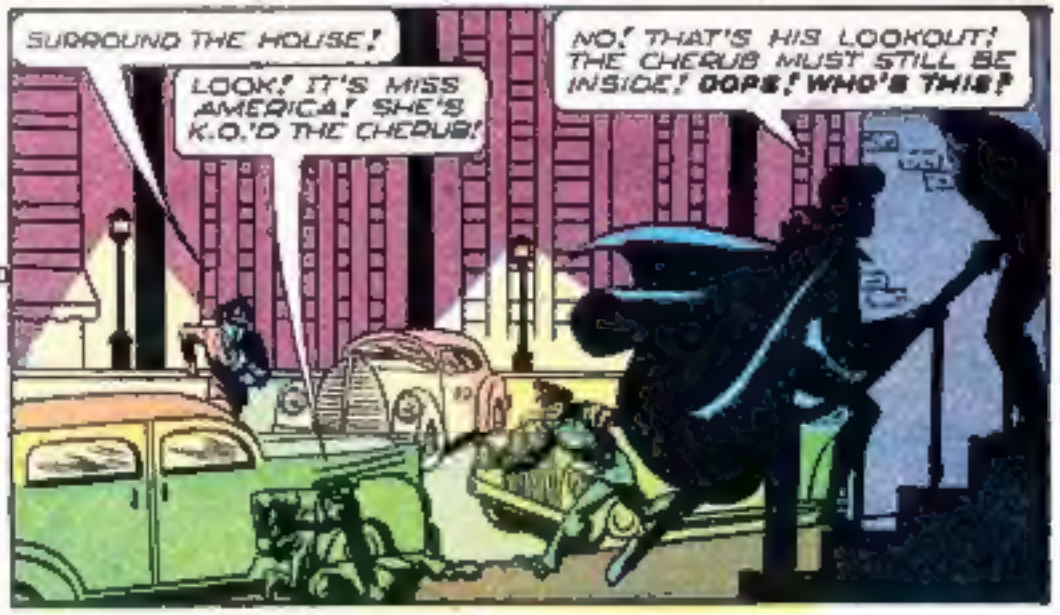
"THE CHERUB"

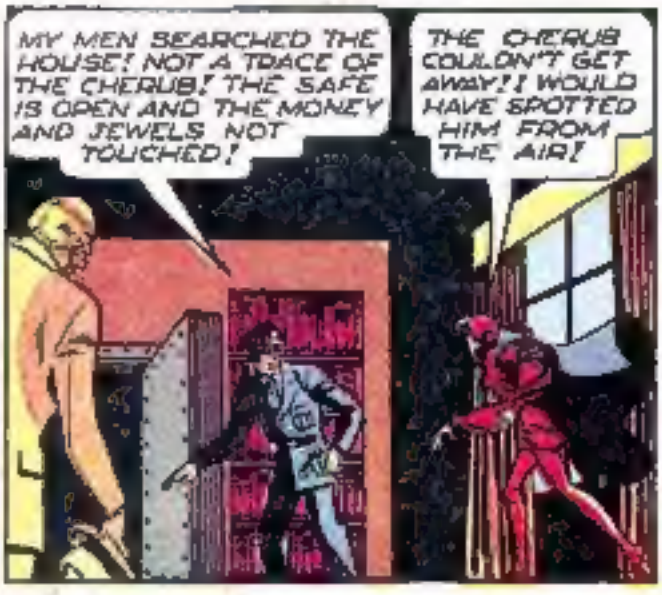
IN THE LIBRARY OF A WEALTHY AND PROMINENT BANKER--
GREAT CAESAR! YOU'RE THE CHERUB! I'VE SEEN YOUR PICTURE IN THE PAPERS!
CORRECT! (SIGH) AND NOW, THE SAFE, IF YOU PLEASE!
NO! SPARE ME! YOU CAN HAVE THE MONEY AND JEWELS! WHY KILL ME!
MY VICTIMS MUST ALL DIE!


NOW THAT THE SORDID IS DONE WITH, WE LEAVE OUR CALLING CARD AND HASTEN TO PAY OUR RESPECTS TO ANXIOUS, WAITIN' FRIENDS!
OH! HELLO! OPERATOR? WOULD YOU PLEASE GET ME POLICE HEAD-QUARTERS?
MEANWHILE-AT HEAD-QUARTERS, A HUDDLE OF POLICE OFFICIALS WAIT IN ANXIOUS DREAD FOR THE CHERUB'S CALL!
IT'S THIS WAITING THAT GETS ME! (GROAN)
WE'LL GET HIM THIS TIME! AS SOON AS THE CALL COMES IN! WE'LL FLASH THE SQUAD CARS AND THEY'LL CONVERGE ON THE SPOT BEFORE HE CAN GET AWAY!
THAT CHERUB MAKEUP IS JUST A CLEVER DISGUISE!
YOU'RE FORGETTING THAT ONE OF HIS VICTIMS LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO BLOW THAT DISGUISE THEORY TO BITS!
ONE OTHER WAITS FOR THE POLICE FLASH TO PROWLING SQUAD CARS, MADELINE JOYCE, ALTER EGO OF THE FAMED CRIME-FIGHTING, MISS AMERICA, EAGER TO MATCH WITS WITH THE DEADLY CHERUB!
CAR 18 -- GO TO ELM AND THIRD --
BEEN TUNED IN ON POLICE CALLS FOR HOURS! DOESN'T LOOK AS IF THAT KILLER IS GOING TO PULL A JOB TODAY!

WHEN--SUDDENLY---
ATTENTION! ALL CARS! THE CHERUB! 22 PARK!
GEE! HE DID AFTED ALL! INTO THE SIDE STREET, THEN INTO THE AIR AS MISS AMERICA!
THE FAMILIAR FIGURE OF MISS AMERICA SWOOPS DOWN ON 22 PARK-- AHEAD OF THE POLICE CARS APPROACHING WITH WAILING SIRENS!
WE'VE CORNERED THIS CHERUB AT LAST! I WOULD HAVE SPOTTED HIM COMING OUT OR IF HE LEFT BEFORE I GOT HERE, WOULD HAVE SEEN HIM ON THE STREETS! HE MUST STILL BE IN THERE!
WH-E-E-E-E-E-E-E-E-
SOMETHING WRONG SOMEWHERE! WHY SHOULD THE CHERUB TAKE HIS TIME ABOUT LEAVING?! OH, OH! WHO'S THIS COMING AT ME?
SO, THE CHERUB DOESN'T TRAVEL ALONE?
GOSH, THIS THUG SURE CAN TAKE PUNISHMENT!
BEEN WASTING TOO MUCH TIME! NOW!

TURNING FROM HER FALLEN OPPONENT AS THE POLICE ROAR UP, MISS AMERICA, ABOUT TO ENTER THE HOUSE, IS CONFRONTED BY THE SMALL STOOPED FIGURE OF AN OLD MAN ABOUT TO LEAVE!


SURROUND THE HOUSE!
LOOK! IT'S MISS AMERICA! SHE'S K.O.'D THE CHERUB!
NO! THAT'S HIS LOOKOUT! THE CHERUB MUST STILL BE INSIDE! OOPS! WHO'S THIS?

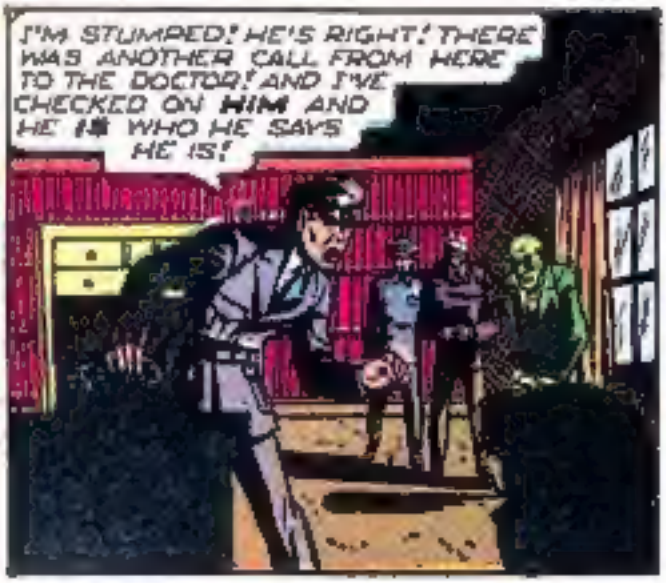

MY MEN SEARCHED THE HOUSE! NOT A TRACE OF THE CHERUB! THE SAFE IS OPEN AND THE MONEY AND JEWELS NOT TOUCHED!
THE CHERUB COULDN'T GET AWAY! I WOULD HAVE SPOTTED HIM FROM THE AIR!

I SAW A SLIGHT YOUTHFUL FIGURE SCURRY AWAY WHEN I CAME IN! PERHAPS MY ENTRANCE SCARED HIM!
THAT DESCRIPTION FITS THE CHERUB!
YES! BUT WHO ARE YOU AND WHY ARE YOU HERE?

THIS MAN IS MY CHAUFFEUR! I'M DR. NEUMENSCH! I RECEIVED A CALL TO COME HERE PROFESSIONALLY!
CALL, EH! YOU CAN CHECK WITH THE TELEPHONE COMPANY, CAPTAIN!

WHILE THE CAPTAIN IS CHECKING WITH THE TELEPHONE COMPANY--

I SEE YOU STUDYING ME CLOSELY! SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU! I AM NOT WEARING A DISGUISE! I REALLY AM AN OLD MAN!
HE'S READING MY THOUGHTS! AND IS RIGHT ABOUT NOT BEING THE CHERUB IN DISGUISE!



UNSEEN BY THE DOCTOR, MISS AMERICA SIGNALS THE CAPTAIN!

THE YOUNG LADY IS INDEED WISE! ADIEU!
YOU HAVE NO ACTUAL CHARGE AGAINST HIM! HE WAS PROPERLY IDENTIFIED! YOU CAN GET HIM WHENEVER YOU WISH!

A FEW MINUTES AFTER THE DOCTOR'S DEPARTURE!

YOU TALKED ME INTO LETTING HIM GO! HE'S WORKING WITH THE CHERUB! HIS GUARD JUMPING YOU, PROVES IT!
YOU MUST TRUST ME! GIVE ME A FEW HOURS AND I THINK I'LL BRING IN THE CHERUB! NOW ABOUT THAT IDENTIFICATION!

THE MEDICAL EXAMINER REMEMBERED HIM FROM SOME ROUTINE CASE! SAID HE CAME FROM VIENNA--! SAY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
CAN'T SAY! BUT KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED! SEE YOU BACK AT HEADQUARTERS!

SOMETHING QUEER ABOUT THAT CALL FROM THE VICTIM'S HOUSE TO THIS DOCTOR! THERE'S THE TELEPHONE COMPANY! HOPE MY THEORY HOLDS WATER!

I COULD DO A JIG AFTER THAT IN-FORMATION FROM THE PHONE COM-PANY! NOW TO GET INTO THE ALLEY NEAR THE LIBRARY AND SWITCH TO MADELINE..... WOULDN'T DO FOR MISS AMERICA TO ASK FOR THE VIENNESE MEDICAL DIRECTORY!

LATER, IN THE LIBRARY, MADELINE MAKES A STARTLING DISCOVERY!

IT SOUNDS FANTASTIC! BUT IT TIES IN WITH THE PHONE CALL! MISS AMERICA HAD BETTER PAY THE FAMED DOCTOR A CALL, BUT SOON!

MEAN-WHILE, AT HEAD-QUARTERS..

I SENT OUT THAT DETAIL TO KEEP TABS ON THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE, SIR!

GOOD! (GROAN) HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN TAILED WHEN WE LET HIM GO!

CALL FOR YOU, CAPTAIN!

(GASP) WHAT?? THE CHERUB??

YES! THE CHERUB! I JUST KILLED DR. NEUMENSCH! HE WAS WORTHLESS TO ME ONCE THE FOOL ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE SUSPECTED! DEAD MEN CANNOT BE MADE TO TALK! HA-HA-HA! (CLICK)

AND SO WHEN MISS AMERICA SWOOPS TO A LANDING AT THE DOCTOR'S HOME...

BACK EVERYBODY! THERE GO THE WALLS!

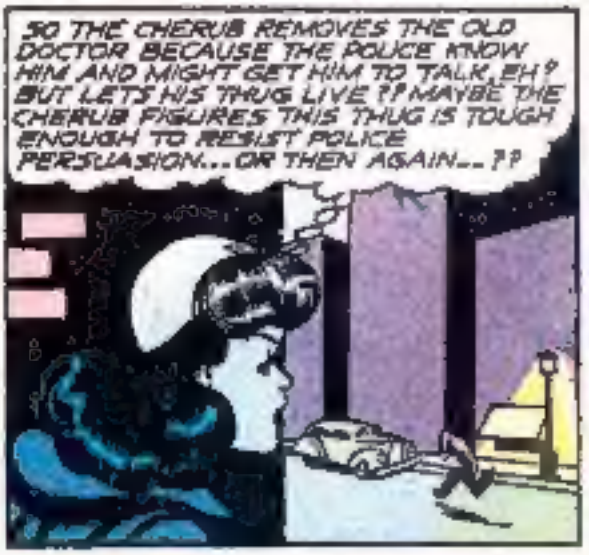
(GAGAH) THE ONLY REAL CLUE TO THE CHERUB IN THERE AND NOTHING BUT A HEAP OF ASHES BY NOW!

TOO LATE!

PD

MISS AMERICA WHILE TRYING TO PACIFY THE IRATE CAPTAIN, SCANS THE CROWD OF ONLOOKERS HELD BACK BY POLICE LINES...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN IT ISN'T LOGICAL FOR THE CHERUB TO KILL THE DOCTOR?
HE NEVER BOTHERED TO DESTROY.... EXCUSE ME! THERE'S SOME ONE I KNOW!


SO THE CHERUB REMOVES THE OLD DOCTOR BECAUSE THE POLICE KNOW HIM AND MIGHT GET HIM TO TALK, EH? BUT LETS HIS THUG LIVE?? MAYBE THE CHERUB FIGURES THIS THUG IS TOUGH ENOUGH TO RESIST POLICE PERSUASION... OR THEN AGAIN...??

HIGH IN THE AIR, MISS AMERICA TRAILS THE CHAUFFEUR TO A WEIRD OLD HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY!

THAT LOOKS LIKE OUR OBJECTIVE DOWN THERE! I CAN'T LET THAT BIG BRUISER INTERFERE WITH THE IMPORTANT BUSINESS AT HAND! HE MAY SPOT ME BEFORE I CAN GET IN!

WON'T DO TO TACKLE HIM AS MISS AMERICA! THE SOUND OF BATTLE MAY SCARE AWAY HIS BOSS! SO WE MEET THE GENT AS MADELINE AND DEPEND ON THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE!

AND SO SACRIFICING THE POWER SHE POSSESSES AS MISS AMERICA, KNOWING WELL THAT AS THE FRAIL MADELINE, SHE IS IN TERRIBLE DANGER AT THE HANDS OF THE BRUTE, THE SLIP OF A GIRL PUTS HER PLAN INTO OPERATION!

SHE FAINTED! BETTER CARRY HER INSIDE AND LET THE BOSS FIGURE OUT WHAT SHE'S HANGING AROUND FOR!
HOPE HE GETS HIS CHIN INTO POSITION!

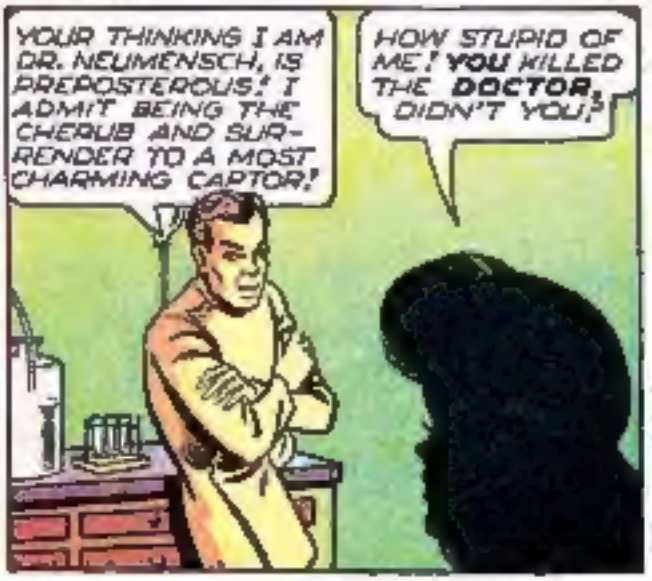
As the suspect stoops to lift her, Madeline lashes out and up with a perfectly aimed kick!

Before the stunned accomplice can gather his jarred senses!

WHEW! BEING MISS AMERICA IS SO MUCH SIMPLER WHEN IT COMES TO POWER PROJECTS! GUESS HE'LL BE SAFE ENOUGH FOR AWHILE, AND HIS KEYS SIMPLIFY MY GETTING INSIDE!

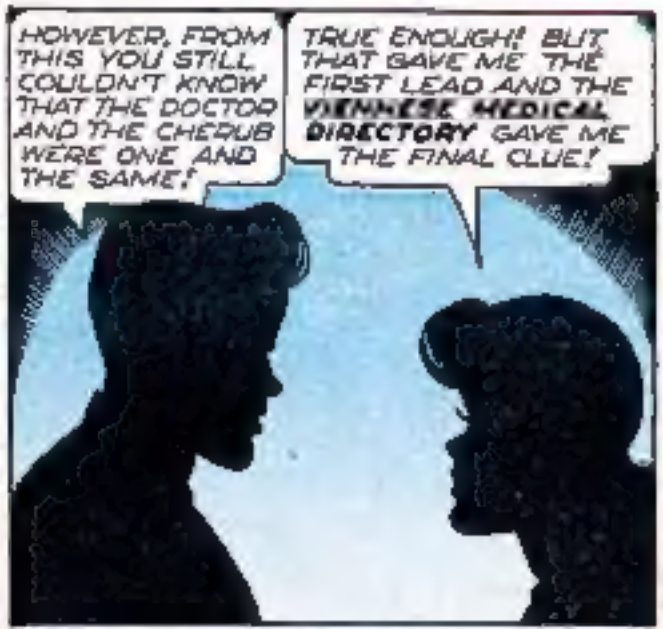
Silently making her way into the old castle-like house, Miss America hesitates in the doorway of a perfectly outfitted laboratory!

NO TRICKS, DOCTOR! I WARN YOU!
I AM MERELY REPLACING THE NEEDLE! THE CONTENTS OF THIS FLASK IS PRECIOUS! EVAPORATION, YOU KNOW!


YOUR THINKING I AM DR. NEUMENSCH, IS PREPOSTEROUS! I ADMIT BEING THE CHERUB AND SURRENDER TO A MOST CHARMING CAPTOR!
HOW STUPID OF ME! YOU KILLED THE DOCTOR, DIDN'T YOU?

(SIGH) YOUR SARCASM WARNS ME IT WOULD BE FUTILE TO DENY THE TRUTH! HOW DID YOU GUESS?
I CHECKED AND LEARNED THAT THE TELEPHONE CALL FROM THE VICTIM'S HOUSE TO DR. NEUMENSCH WAS MADE AFTER THE CHERUB CALLED THE POLICE!

--SO, OF COURSE, THE VICTIM WAS DEAD BY THEN AND COULD NOT MAKE THE CALL--- CLEVER! YES! I CALLED WHILE YOU WERE BATTLING MY CHAUFFEUR REALIZING I WOULD BE CAUGHT! I ARRANGED AN ALIBI FOR MY BEING THERE!

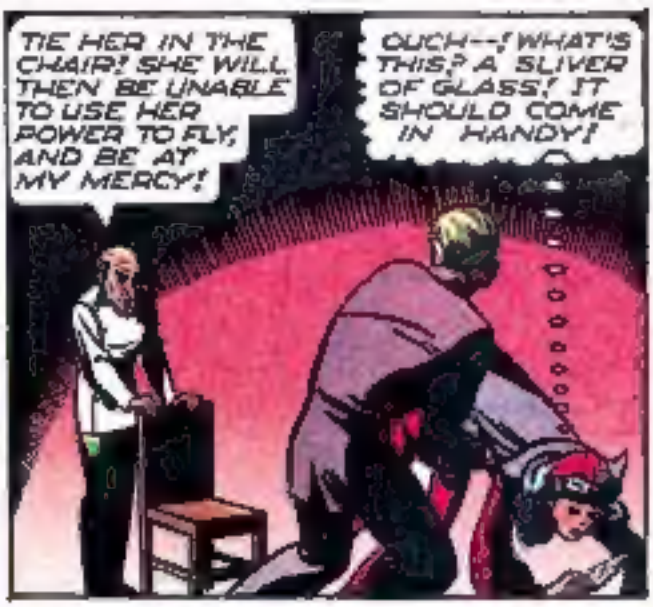

HOWEVER, FROM THIS YOU STILL COULDN'T KNOW THAT THE DOCTOR AND THE CHERUB WERE ONE AND THE SAME!
TRUE ENOUGH! BUT THAT GAVE ME THE FIRST LEAD AND THE VIENNESE MEDICAL DIRECTORY GAVE ME THE FINAL CLUE!

I CAN QUOTE "DR. FRANZ NEUMENSCH, PROFESSOR OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF WIEN--RETIRED FROM ACTIVE PRACTICE AND TEACHING, TO DO RESEARCH ON HIS THEORY--- 'THE REJUVENATION OF MAN'--- SHALL I GO ON, DOCTOR?

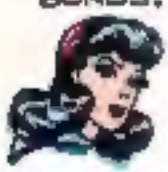
YOU ARE RIGHT! AFTER MANY LONG YEARS OF DIFFICULT EXPERIMENTS, I FINALLY RESOLVED A SERUM WHICH RESTORES YOUTH AND VIGOR TO THE AGED! BUT--ALAS--MY TRIUMPH WAS INCOMPLETE! THE SERUM WEARS OFF IN A FEW HOURS!
WHY SHOULD A MAN LIKE YOU TURN CRIMINAL?
THE NEED FOR MONEY TO CARRY ON! I WAS TIRED OF A LIFE OF POVERTY AND REALIZED THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE CHERUB ROLE! I WOULD TIME MY FORAYS A FEW MINUTES BEFORE I KNEW THE SERUM WOULD WEAR OFF!
THE VICTIMS HAD TO BE REMOVED! THEY MIGHT SEE THE CHERUB BECOME HIS REAL SELF!
(GULP) GOOD GOSH! YOU ARE NO LONGER THE CHERUB?? YOU CHANGED RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES!
MISS AMERICA FREEZES IN AMAZEMENT AS THE CHERUB SUDDENLY BECOMES THE OLD DOCTOR, HER USUALLY ALERT SENSES LULLED BY THE SOFT ALMOST HYPNOTIC WORDS PURRING FROM SMILING LIPS!
YES! THE SERUM WORE OFF! THE ACTION IS SWIFT! BUT THIS NEEDLE WILL SOON RECTIFY THIS AND I SHALL AGAIN BE THE CHERUB!
HA-HA! YOU FOOL! I SAW MY MAN STEALING TOWARD US AND KEPT YOU ENTERTAINED! AND WHILE HE FINISHES YOU, I WILL INJECT-- HEY! WHAT THE--??
NO MORE BEING THE CHERUB FOR YOU, DOCTOR!
CRASH!

LIGHTNING INSTANTANEOUS LEAP AND THE CHAUFFEUR GRABS EMPTY AIR!
WHEW! CLOSE! MUSTN'T LET THAT GORILLA GET ME IN THAT BEAR HUG OF HIS!
I WILL CRUSH YOU WITH MY HANDS! MISSED!
THE BEFUDDLED THUG THRESHES THE AIR WITH MIGHTY BLOWS IN AN EFFORT TO BRING DOWN THE ZOOMING, SWOOPING, DARTING MISS AMERICA!
I'LL KEEP JABBING AWAY AT THIS HULK UNTIL HE'S GOOD AND GROGGY AND THEN I'LL GIVE HIM THE FINAL "HAYMAKER!"
WATCHING HIS OPPORTUNITY, THE OLD DOCTOR SWINGS HIS WEAPON IN A VICIOUS ARC AT THE VERY MOMENT THAT MISS AMERICA CLOSES IN FOR THE KILL!
THIS IS IT! I GOT HIM FLOUNDERING! HOW TO JAB HIS CHIN INTO POSITION FOR--- OW-- UGH!
AH! GOOD!
BOP

I'LL FINISH HER! SHE IS STILL ALIVE!
NO! THERE'S THE PROBLEM OF GETTING RID OF HER BODY!
GOT TO THINK OF SOMETHING! I'M TOO WEAK TO CHANCE A BATTLE AGAIN!


TIE HER IN THE CHAIR! SHE WILL THEN BE UNABLE TO USE HER POWER TO FLY, AND BE AT MY MERCY!
OUCH--! WHAT'S THIS? A SLIVER OF GLASS! IT SHOULD COME IN HANDY!

FOR THE NEXT TEN MINUTES, MISS AMERICA FEIGNING INSENSIBILITY, WATCHES HER CAPTOR BUSYING HIMSELF WITH TEST TUBES WHILE SHE FURTIVELY SAWS AWAY AT HER BONDS!



I SEE YOU HAVE QUITE A SUPPLY OF SERUM AND HAVE BECOME THE CHERUB ONCE MORE!
YES! I PREFER BEING THE CHERUB! AS FOR THE SERUM, IT IS SIMPLE TO CONCOCT!

DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU'RE GOING TO INJECT ME WITH YOUR SERUM AND TURN ME INTO A BABY!? OR DOES IT WORK ONLY ON THE OLD?
IT IS THE SAME SERUM, BUT WITH CERTAIN CHEMICALS ADDED!
YOU WILL BE INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT THIS SERUM WILL ROB THE YOUNG OF THEIR YOUTH! AGE YOU AT LEAST FOUR SCORE YEARS!
AND AS THE CHERUB IS ABOUT TO INJECT THE DREADED SERUM!
THIS WILL BE PAINLESS! JUST A LIGHT PRICK OF THE NEEDLE AND MISS AMERICA BECOMES A WRINKLED OLD HAG WITH BUT A FEW DAYS TO LIVE!
SNAP!
OUCH! MY WRIST!
I STILL HAVE TO FREE MY FEET AND THAT MEANS STOPPING THE CHAUFFEUR IN SOME WAY!
THAT'S ONE WAY OF DOING IT! NOW TO CUT THRU THE DOPE AT MY FEET WITH THE GLASS SLIVER!
WHAM
WHEW! JUST GOT ONE FOOT FREE IN TIME!
W-O-O-FFF!

HAMPERED BY ONE FOOT ENTANGLED IN THE ROPES, MISS AMERICA FALLS VICTIM TO THE SWIFT RUSH OF THE CHAUFFEUR!
OH-OH! HE CAME OUT OF THE HUDDLE WITH THE CHERUB SOONER THAN I THOUGHT!
WHA--!? THE CHERUB'S AIMING A GUN!?
MIND AND BODY COORDINATE IN SPLIT SECOND ACTION AS THE CHERUB LOOSES THE ENTIRE MAGAZINE OF SHOTS!
SORRY, MY UGLY FRIEND! BETTER YOU THAN ME!
U-UGH-GH!
NOW MY LITTLE SNARLING CHERUB IS GOING BYE-BYE TO THE POLICE STATION!
HA-HA! WE WILL BOTH DIE! THE WHOLE PLACE WILL BE BLOWN TO BITS!
I'M GETTING OUT, BUT FAST!
COME BACK!
NO THANKS!
OUCH! THAT WAS PRETTY CLOSE FOR ME! THAT ENDS THE CHERUB AND HIS DEVILISH SERUM!
BOOM
LATER--THAT NIGHT!
UGH! IMAGINE ME, AN OLD WRINKLED HAG! HOPE I DON'T HAVE A NIGHTMARE ABOUT IT!